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June 30, 2005

~~HD 4620~~
HD 4619

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives:

I am filing for your consideration "An Act to Expand Family Shelter Eligibility."

The General Appropriation Bill that I signed today increases funding to the Department of Transitional Assistance for the expenses of the Emergency Assistance program in item 4403-2120, and increases the income eligibility level to 130 percent of the Federal poverty level. This represents a substantial increase over the current level of 100 percent of the Federal poverty level established by the Fiscal Year 2005 budget, which we do not believe is supported by the appropriation. I did not veto this provision in House Bill 4200 because a veto would cause the income eligibility level to revert to the statutory standard and would have the effect of decreasing the income eligibility level.

I therefore recommend that item 4403-2120 of section 2 of House Bill 4200 of the General Appropriation Bill for Fiscal Year 2006 be amended to authorize the Department of Transitional Assistance to utilize the higher income level when there is sufficient shelter space and funding.

I urge your prompt and favorable action on this recommendation.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mitt Romney".
Mitt Romney
Governor



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

IN THE YEAR TWO THOUSAND FIVE

AN ACT TO EXPAND FAMILY SHELTER ELIGIBILITY

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

SECTION 1. Item 4403-2120 of section 2 of House Bill 4200 of the General Appropriation Bill for Fiscal Year 2006 is hereby amended by inserting after the words “; provided, that eligibility shall be limited to families with income at or below 100 per cent of the federal poverty level” the following words:-

; provided, that the department may grant waivers of the income eligibility standard when the department determines there is sufficient capacity in shelters under contract with the department; provided further, that any such waiver of the income eligibility standard shall not authorize benefits for families whose income exceeds 130 per cent of the federal poverty level; provided further, that said waiver authority shall remain in force through June 30, 2006.

SECTION 2. This act shall take effect immediately.